DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 308 SP 032 650

AUTHOR	McDiarmid, G. Williamson; Price, Jeremy
TITLE	Prospective Teachers' Views of Diverse Learners: A Study of the Participants in the ABCD Project. Research Report 90-6.
INSTITUTION	National Center for Research on Teacher Education, East Lansing, MI.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jul 90
NOTE	56p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 116 Erickson Hall, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034 ($5.80).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Ability; Beliefs; *Cultural Differences; Cultural Pluralism; Interviews; Minority Group Children; Multicultural Education; Program Effectiveness; Questionnaires; *Stereotypes; *Student Characteristics; *Student Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity Project

ABSTRACT

Using data from pre- and postprogram questionnaires and interviews, the study describes the views that a group of 17 student teachers drawn from 5 Michigan universities hold of culturally diverse learners both before and after a 3-day workshop intended to influence their views. The study found that the multicultural presentations had little effect on students' beliefs--about the capabilities of learners labelled "high" and "low" ability, about the use of stereotypes in making teaching decisions, or about providing genuinely equal opportunities to learn challenging and empowering subject matter. It is suggested that teacher educators may need to rethink both the content and pedagogy of opportunities to learn about teaching culturally divers learners. The appendixes include: (1) The ABCD (Accepting Behavior for Cultural Diversity) for Teachers Training Schedule; (2) Description of the ABCD Sample; (3) Examples of Pre- and Postprogram Responses to Scenario #2.

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED324308

Research Report 90-6

Prospective Teachers' Views of Diverse Learners: A Study of the Participants in the ABCD Project

G. Williamson McDiarmid and Jeremy Price

National
Center for Research
on Teacher Education

SP032 650

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. W. McDiarmid

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Sponsored by the United States Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Research Report 90-6

PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' VIEWS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS: A STUDY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ABCD PROJECT

G. Williamson McDiarmid and Jeremy Price

Published by

The National Center for Research on Teacher Education
116 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034

July 1990

This work has been supported by the Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity for Teachers Project of the Office of Professional Development at the Michigan Department of Education and funded in part by a grant from the Council of Chief State School Officers. Additional support was provided by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University. The National Center for Research on Teacher Education is funded primarily by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily represent the position, policy, or endorsement of the Michigan DOE, CCSSO, nor OERI/ED.

National Center for Research on Teacher Education

The National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NCRTE) was founded at Michigan State University in 1985 by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

The NCRTE is committed to improving teacher education through research on its purposes, its character and quality, and its role in teacher learning. NCRTE defines teacher education broadly and includes in its portfolio such diverse approaches as preservice, inservice, and induction programs and alternate routes to teaching.

To further its mission, the NCRTE publishes research reports, issue papers, technical series, conference proceedings, and a newsletter on contemporary issues in teacher education. For more information about the NCRTE or to be placed on its mailing list, please write to the Editor, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 116 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034.

Director:	Mary M. Kennedy
Associate Directors:	Robert E. Floden G. Williamson McDiarmid
Editor:	Sandra Gross

Many papers published by the NCRTE are based on the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, a single multisite longitudinal study. The researchers who have contributed to this study are listed below:

Marianne Amarel
Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Joyce Cain
Sandra Callis
Barbara Camilleri
Anne Chang
David K. Cohen
Ada Beth Cutler
Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Mary L. Gomez
Samgeun K. Kwon
Magdalene Lampert
Perry Lanier
Glenda Lappan
Sarah McCarthey
James Mead
Susan L. Melnick
Monica Mitchell
Harold Morgan
James Mosenthal
Gary Natriello
Barbara Neufeld
Lynn Paine
Michelle Parker
Richard Prawat
Pamela Schram
Trish Stoddart
M. Teresa Tatto
Sandra Wilcox
Suzanne Wilson
Lauren Young
Kenneth M. Zeichner
Karen K. Zumwalt

Abstract

Using data from pre- and postprogram questionnaires and interviews, the authors describe the views that a group of 17 student teachers drawn from five Michigan universities hold of culturally diverse learners both before and after a three-day workshop intended to influence their views. The authors found that the multicultural presentations had little effect on students' beliefs--about the capabilities of learners labelled "high" and "low" ability, about the use of stereotypes in making teaching decisions, or about providing genuinely equal opportunities to learn challenging and empowering subject matter. The authors suggest that teacher educators may need to rethink both the content and pedagogy of opportunities to learn about teaching culturally diverse learners.

Table of Contents

Evaluation Design. 2

Results. 4

Discussion. 15

Recommendations. 20

Conclusion. 23

References. 25

Appendices

Appendix A: Program of ABCD Training
Appendix B: Description of ABCD Sample
Appendix C: Examples of Pre- and Postprogram Responses to Scenario #2

List of Tables

1. Responses to Stereotypes in Scenario #1. . . . . 4 ff.

2. Responses to Addressing Differences in Academic Tasks in Scenario #2. . . . . 8 ff.

3. Attribution of School Success and Failure. . . . . 8 ff.

4. Differences in Types of Tasks Believed Appropriate for Teaching Mathematics to Low and High Achievers. . . . . 10 ff.

5. Differences in Types of Tasks Believed Appropriate for Teaching Writing to Low and High Achievers . . . . . 10 ff.

6. Beliefs About Teaching, Learning, and Learners . . . . . 12 ff.

7. Views of the Treatment of Regional Dialects . . . . . 12 ff.

8. Purposes Prospective Teachers Might Pursue in Ethnically Heterogeneous Classrooms. . . . . 14 ff.

9. Views on Christmas Celebrations in Schools . . . . . 14 ff.

PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' VIEWS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS: A STUDY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ABCD PROJECT[1]

G. Williamson McDiarmid and Jeremy Price[2]

The stated purpose of the Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity for Teachers (ABCD) project is

> to provide teachers from the dominant white culture with the knowledge and skills to work with students of diverse cultural backgrounds and to view cultural diversity as a positive influence on learning. Secondly, the project will attempt to improve perception of expectations for students from culturally diverse background. (Office of Professional Development, 1988, p. 1)

To this end the project director convened a planning committee of teachers and district specialists, university teacher education faculty, Michigan Department of Education specialists, and representatives of organizations with a particular interest in multicultural education. This planning committee is distinguished by the ethnic diversity of its members, most of whom are professionals of color. During the first meeting, a subcommittee was formed to develop an evaluation plan. In thinking about the purpose of the evaluation, members of the subcommittee agreed that the primary purpose of collecting information should be to inform project personnel about how student teachers think about teaching and learning in culturally diverse classrooms. In other words, the subcommittee claimed that the issue of how student teachers would likely behave in the classroom is more important than whether or not they remembered what was taught or demonstrated in the project workshops. Members stated that participants could answer questions based on the training "correctly"--and, yet, not have the training affect their attitudes or behaviors. This decision was critical to the design of the evaluation, described below.

The training, which is described in detail elsewhere (Carter-Cooper, 1990), consisted of a series of presentations by various experts in areas such as racial prejudice, student self-esteem, classroom management, cooperative learning, learning styles, multicultural curricular materials, and specific cultural groups such as Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans (Appendix A contains a detailed schedule of the training). The primary assumption underlying the training was that student teachers lack

---

[1]The ABCD Project is the Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity for Teachers Project of the Office of Professional Development at the Michigan Department of Education (DOE) and is funded by the Council of Chief State Officers.

[2]G. Williamson McDiarmid, associate professor of teacher education at Michigan State University, is associate director of the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. Jeremy Price is a research assistant with the Center. The authors gratefully acknowledge the advice, support, and contributions of the members of the planning committee of the ABCD project; Ellen Carter-Cooper and Deborah Clemmons, the project directors; Catherine Smith of DOE who suggested questionnaire items and wordings of items; Center research assistants Deborah Ongtooguk, who conducted some of the interviews on which this study is in part based, and Samgeun Kwon, who oversaw data entry and analysis.

certain information that is critical to working with culturally diverse students. In this regard, the content and format of the training is similar to multicultural courses that typify university-based teacher education programs and those offered by school districts (McDiarmid, 1989a, 1990c).

Evaluation Design

The purpose of the evaluation design was to find out what student teachers who participated in the ABCD training believe about learners, learning, teaching, subject matter, and the context in learning and teaching and how these fundamental beliefs were influenced by the training. Schwab (1960/1978) and Kerr (1981), among others, argue that all teachers' actions are posited on what they know and believe about learners and learning, pedagogy and subject matter, and the social and political context. If we cannot observe teachers' activities in the classroom, we can try to find out the beliefs that underlie their actions. As systematic observation of program participants was beyond the project's limited resources, we designed an evaluation to reveal student teachers' beliefs and how these changed.

Sample

The colleges and universities that agreed to recruit students for the training were responsible for selecting students, both for the experimental group and for the control group. Consequently, we cannot assume that these students were representative of those in the various preservice teacher education programs that participated in the project nor, of course, of teacher education students in general.

Some 22 students attended the first training. Of these, 17 completed and returned the self-administered questionnaire. Of the 15 students in the control group, only 2 returned completed pretreatment questionnaires. The posttreatment administration of the questionnaire was, however, the critical data collection point for students in the control group, for we wished to compare the beliefs of students who had completed student teaching but had not been involved in the ABCD training with a group that had both completed their student teaching and the training. Nine of the 15 students in the control group returned completed posttreatment questionnaires--or 60 percent. Only 13 of the 22 in the experimental group completed the questionnaire after the training. The small number of students in the original samples and the small number who completed the questionnaire make interpretation problematic. Demographic characteristics of the student teachers in the sample are summarized in a table in Appendix B.

In reporting the results below, we have not used the control group as our primary contrast because of the small number of returns. Where appropriate, we have used data from a comparable group of preservice teacher education students collected as part of the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study of the National Center for Research on

Teacher Education (NCRTE, 1988). Students in this sample were enrolled in standard preservice teacher education programs and completed the self-administered questionnaire items during student teaching.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for data collection. A questionnaire was used to collect students' views of teaching and learning. Most of the items on the questionnaire were taken from the questionnaire developed by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NCRTE) and used in their national longitudinal study of teacher education, the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study (McDiarmid and Ball, 1988). A primary advantage of using items from the NCRTE questionnaire is that we were able to compare students in our samples to a national sample of teacher education students.

The subcommittee on evaluation developed seven additional items to tap student teachers' beliefs about specific issues in multicultural teaching. These items asked students to choose from a list of academic activities those they believe appropriate for low-and for high-achieving students, to choose from a list of activities those most appropriate for a multicultural classroom, to identify a position on school celebrations of Christmas closest to their own, and to choose from descriptions of different ways to respond to regional dialects in classrooms the one closest to their own.

The second instrument was a brief telephone interview that consisted of two teaching scenarios to which students were asked to respond. Like most of the items on the questionnaire, these scenarios were taken from the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study of the NCRTE. Again, using these interview scenarios allowed us to compare students in the ABCD study with a national sample of students. The text of both interview scenarios are included in the results section below.

The subcommittee's decision to pose questions that asked about views of learners, learning, teaching, subject matter, and context without reference to ethnic differences was based on our knowledge of the social response bias that makes most measures of attitudes towards ethnically different others invalid. When we did pose questions about ethnically different students, we provided a context so that the respondent could agree or disagree with a "positive" or "neutral" stereotype (i.e., Native Americans are "shy"). We also provided, in our second interview scenario, a description of a classroom in which three of the students' ethnicity is identified. We wanted to see what role, if any, information on the students' ethnicity played in their thinking about teaching and learning. While we tried to create measures that would allow us to at least reduce the social response bias, we recognize that the mere mention of ethnicity is likely to generate, in some respondents' answers, bias.

Finally, the decision to ask questions to reveal student teachers' root beliefs produces instruments and an evaluation which is not highly sensitive to the effects of this specific

program. The subcommittee argued, however, that the value of an evaluation would lie in the information it could provide on how students would be likely to act in the classroom rather than in whether or not they master the information available in the training. While arguments could be made for both types of evaluations, the subcommittee was persuaded that learning more about the beliefs that underlie student teachers' activities would better serve the project than a more narrowly conceived assessment of participants' recall of the information presented.

Results

Stereotyping

One of the interview scenarios asked students what they thought of an explanation proffered by colleagues for the physical marginalization of Native-American students in their classroom:

Scenario #1

> Imagine that you have been hired midway through the school year to take over for a teacher who is going on maternity leave. During the first day, you notice a group of Native Americans sitting together at the back of the class, while white and Asian-American students are sitting in front. The Native-American students don't volunteer to answer questions or to participate in discussions. Later, when you mention this to colleagues in the teachers' lounge, they tell you that the Native-American students are naturally shy and that asking them questions embarrasses them so it's best not to call on them.
>
> What do you think of the teachers' explanation of the Native-American students' behavior?
>
> How would you deal with the Native-American students in this class?

Table 1 shows the pattern for students' responses to this scenario. Before the training, only about 20 percent of the student teachers in the experimental sample either accepted the characterization of Native-American students as "shy" or weren't sure whether or not the characterization was accurate, implying that they would likely consider it valid information in teaching if it were accurate. Before the program, nearly 80 percent of the students rejected the characterization. Afterwards, a small but not significant increase occurred in the percentage of responses that were so unclear, meandering, or conflicting that we couldn't determine the respondent's view of the stereotype. This may indicate that the program has

Table 1

Responses to Stereotype in Scenario #1

Response	% ABCD sample		% National sample (N = 38)
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)	
Accepts or isn't sure	21	31	42
Rejects	78	54	45
Unclear	0	15	13
Totals*	100	100	100

*Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

stimulated students to think about the issue and that they are still trying to sort out their understandings.

The only student in the treatment sample who accepted the stereotype responded as follows:

> Well, I would tend to think that their behavior is more appropriate for their background and it probably is . . . the way that they treat other people according to the Native-American tradition. They tend to sort of stick together and not really volunteer, interact in a way that, say, Americans, Caucasians, do. (Siilik, 1)[3]

This individual seems to have become more uncertain about her view of Native-American students in the postprogram interview ("R" stands for "respondent" and "I" for "interviewer"):

> R: Well, I mean it could be true but I am not really sure. I think there might be another reason why they wouldn't want to answer questions.
>
> I: Maybe you could give me other reasons.
>
> R: Well, I mean they might not want to call attention to themselves--not shyness necessarily--maybe a cultural trait or they somehow don't feel part of the group.
>
> I: What do you mean by a cultural trait?
>
> R: That they would learn in their culture, from their parents and other Native Americans--not to call attention to themselves as individuals. (Siilik, 2)

While this student never explicitly rejects the generalization as a stereotype, this response in the second interview reveals her understanding that social behaviors considered appropriate in a pupil's primary group might conflict with the expectations embedded in the culture of classrooms (Jackson, 1968; Suina, 1985).

Several students in the sample seemed to sense that something was amiss with the characterization but weren't clear about what it was: "Well, I think it could be a valid reason based on her observations--not necessarily the correct one but it could be valid" (Beluga, 1). Unfortunately, we do not know what she meant by "valid." Others who also do

---

[3]All names that appear in parentheses at the end of quotations are pseudonyms for the students in our sample. The number that follows the name indicates whether it is a preprogram ("1") or postprogram interview ("2").

not reject the characterization as a stereotype demonstrate skepticism about the generalization and feel they ought to do research to find out whether or not it is true:

> Well, what I would do is since my knowledge of Native-American students is limited, I assume at this point that that is a relatively accurate statement, but I would want to research it further. I do believe that that's [the characterization of Native-American students as shy] correct, however I would want to go and either discuss with some other people, in addition to those teachers, persons who are Native American and look in books and various other resources to find out more about the culture of those children and then from that point decide what I would like to do as far as having the students participate to their fullest in the class, which may not necessarily entail having them speak in a question-answer type situation but possibly do art work or written type of work that could be shared with the class to maximize their talents and still make them a part of the classroom situation so that they aren't isolated . . . once I have researched the situation. (Ermize, 2)

Most students, both before and after the training, reject either the specific generalization about Native Americans or all stereotypes:

> I tend to think they [the teachers] are being overly simplistic. There might be something to what they are saying I am not really sure. I would disregard their explanation and I would run the classroom a little differently. I would think that they have some stereotypical responses that they developed that I would disregard. I wouldn't listen to what they were saying. (Goshawk, 1)

> Oh, I think that's wrong. . . . I don't think that there's any race or culture that's naturally shy. (Raven, 1)

> Personally I guess I would think it's kind of a weak response. I wouldn't want to stereotype anybody in that way. I think everybody is different and I also think that with children, especially if they're elementary school children, they kind of become what you tell them they are. So if you insist that they are shy and shouldn't be answering questions, I think that's exactly what they do. (Grayling, 1)

Clearly, before any training at all, most student teachers in our sample recognize and reject stereotypes of ethnically different children.

In sum, we found that most student teachers reject generalizations even before the training. On this particular item, we found no statistically significant differences between students' responses before and after the training.

Scenario #2

Mrs. Jones teaches a large first-grade class. She tries to find ways to individualize while still maintaining order. Below are descriptions of some of Mrs. Jones's students, along with examples of how she works with them.

Vikki is a shy Vietnamese girl. She was recently adopted and her English still sounds awkward. Her parents buy her many dresses and put ribbons in her long hair every day. She is very cooperative in the classroom but tends not to play with the other children. Today, Mrs. Jones has Vikki matching geometric shapes. She moves past Vikki's desk regularly, often patting her on the head or back as she passes, and sometimes stopping to present a new, more challenging shape for Vikki to try to match.

Brian, a black child, just joined the class this month. His father is a corporate executive and moves frequently. As soon as Brian enrolled in school, his mother volunteered to work in Mrs. Jones's classroom each week. Brian is very competitive. He has joined the junior basketball, soccer and softball leagues and has started swimming lessons. At his mother's request, Mrs. Jones moved James away from Brian's table so that the two boys would not fight. Today Brian is working in a self-contained learning center. He is looking at a picture book and using a tape recorder to dictate a story to go with the pictures. Mrs. Jones will play the tape to the rest of the class after recess.

James, another black student, is so active he sometimes disrupts the other children. His mother never graduated from high school and never married. She relies on her family and on welfare for support. James hasn't as many nice clothes as some other children and sometimes he expresses resentment toward other students in the class. Mrs. Jones has moved James several times because he was disrupting other children. Today, Mrs. Jones has James practicing writing the letters "m" and "n." She tries to keep him on task by frequent comments. Today, her comments included these:

> You've made a lot of progress today, James. Let's see how many more letters you can do before recess.
>
> I like the way James is working quietly today.
>
> These letters look much more neat than they did last week.
>
> Don't lean back in your chair, James.

Understanding the Relationship Between Academic Tasks and Opportunities to Learn

The second interview scenario was designed to elicit students' understandings about the effects that different tasks have on students' attitudes, behaviors, and opportunities to learn. In the scenario, the teacher has assigned very different tasks to three children of color. A few details about the children's family circumstances are added to see what respondents do with such information. A primary purpose of the scenario is to see how student teachers think about differences among children and the opportunities they have to learn.

The responses of the students in the treatment group as well as those from the NCRTE national sample are shown in Table 2. While about half of the students in the ABCD treatment group did at least discuss the academic tasks that the children had been assigned, none of them noted that tracing letters and dictating stories into a tape to be played to an audience later afford children quite different understandings about written language and reading, not to mention about themselves as learners of both. The training did not seem to affect students' sensitivity to differences in academic tasks--insofar as this item measures such sensitivity. The following response is typical of those we got in the interviews:

> I don't think that she's showing any real racial discrimination at all. And it sounds like she's individualizing. . . . It sounds like she's matching the children's needs. Their situations. James is the one with the problem. It sounds like she is giving him positive encouragement to a point. However, to single him out, to say things like that out loud too often I think is wrong, too. She's overdoing it. To mention once in a while that James is sitting quietly today and she really appreciates it, I think that's nice. But to overdo it will put a lot of shame on the child. And in terms of Brian, he's in the self-contained learning center, he's taping the story which she's going to read to the whole class later. He's the competitive guy whose parents move around a lot. He's in all the different sporting activities. His father is a corporate executive. That's basically the facts . . . . I think [the teacher] is doing fine. I can't really see any problems as far as that goes. The only problem I do find is that they [James and Brian] don't get along according to the mother. I would have to wonder why, you know, if that's encouraging the class or not. If a parent requests it, there's only so many things you can do. (Vole, 1)

The one element in the story that many students in our sample noticed was the use of praise and reprimands:

> I would probably try not to be as negative as "don't sit back in your chair." Because to just tell a child "don't" is not good. To use something more positive

Table 2

Responses to Addressing Differences in Academic Tasks in Scenario #2

Response	% ABCD sample		% National sample (N = 38)
	Preprogram (N = 14)	Postprogram (N = 13)	
Doesn't address	50	54	60
Addresses	50	38	38
Addresses consequences	0	8	2
Totals*	100	100	100

*Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

Table 3

Attribution of School Success and Failure

	% ABCD sample		% National sample (N = 38)
Source of Students' School Success	**Preprogram** (N = 17)	**Postprogram** (N = 13)	
Student factors			
Home Background	24	15	15
Intellectual ability	6	8	7
Enthusiasm or perseverance	12	15	39
Teacher factors			
Attention to individuality	24	23	11
Use of effective methods	24	15	20
Enthusiasm or perseverance	12	23	7
Totals[a]	100	100	100
Source of Students' School Failure			
Student factors			
Home background	12	15	21
Lack of intellectual ability	0	0	0
Indifference	18	0	31
Teacher factors			
Ignores student uniqueness	29	46	18
Use of ineffective methods	29	15	20
Indifference	12	23	7
Totals[a]	100	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

> as in a "do rule." Please sit up straight. Or do sit up straight. Instead of don't lean back. (Vole, 1)

Indeed, half of the sample did not even mention the differences in the tasks that the children had been assigned--much less the differences in what children can learn from the tasks. Their attention was focused almost totally on the teacher's management of the children's behavior.

Students' responses didn't change significantly between the first administration of the interview and the second. To repeat, the small size of the sample makes registering meaningful change difficult at best. Examples from both pre- and postprogram responses to the scenario are included in Appendix C.

Student Teacher Beliefs

School success and failure. A key item on the questionnaire asked students to choose from among six factors the one they believe most responsible for success and failure in school. Three of the choices--home background, intellectual ability, and enthusiasm--are factors originating with the student and his family. The three remaining choices are teacher factors--attention to student uniqueness, effective teaching methods, and teacher enthusiasm or perseverance.

Before the training, 42 percent of the students in the experimental group chose a student factor as the major source of school success with nearly a quarter selecting home background and 12 percent student enthusiasm or perseverance (see Table 3). Nearly sixty percent of the students entered the training believing that teacher factors were primarily responsible for student success--either teachers' attention to student uniqueness (24 percent) or use of effective methods (24 percent). After the training, student choices had not changed significantly: 38 percent believed that students were primarily responsible for their success while 61 percent chose a teacher factor.

Most students in the sample attributed school failure primarily to teaching factors with 29 percent of the students citing teachers' ignorance of student uniqueness and 29 percent selecting the teachers' failure to use effective methods. Thirty percent held students themselves responsible for their own failure in school.

As with the attribution of success, student teachers' identification of the source of school failure did not change significantly after the training. While not statistically significant, the proportion of students who identified ignoring student uniqueness as the major source of school failure increased to 46 percent. Proportionately half as many students as before the training identify the source of school failure to be the teachers' failure to use effective methods. Overall, only 15 percent of the student teachers believed, after the training, that students are principally responsible for their own failure.

Differences in types of tasks believed appropriate for "low" and "high" achievers. Research by Goodlad (1984) and Oakes (1985) has demonstrated that children placed in low-ability groups encounter opportunities to learn that differ in substance and quality from those children placed in high-ability groups encounter. The questionnaire contained four items designed to tap student teachers' notions about tasks that they would consider appropriate for children who were labelled "low" and "high" achievers in mathematics and in writing. Asking the question in the context of two school subjects would enable us to examine the relationship between views of the subject and views of learners.

When we asked student teachers before the training which task they would emphasize most in teaching mathematics to "low achievers," over a third chose problem solving, while a quarter chose making mathematics fun, and nearly 20 percent selected helping students understand the theories behind the topics (Table 4). Asked the same question about "high achievers," nearly half the students responded they would emphasize problem solving while almost a third chose helping students understand the theories behind the topics. Only about 10 percent of the student teachers said they would emphasize making mathematics fun with the "high achievers."

While not statistically significant, some changes were evident in students' posttraining responses. Making math fun was a slightly more popular choice for "low" achievers after the training. After the training, a greater proportion of student teachers said that they would emphasize problem solving with both "low" and "high" achievers. Unfortunately, because the questionnaire was self-administered, we don't know how respondents interpreted the phrase "problem solving." Our experience with this phrase in other research is that prospective teachers apply it to a range of activities--from computation to complex scenarios that require students to sift through a lot of information in figuring out a solution. In future, we will include this item in the interview so that we can explore student teachers' understandings of these categories of activities.

Asked before the training about appropriate topics in teaching writing to "low" achievers, over a third of the sample said they would emphasize helping students understand the roles of audience and purpose while nearly a third would emphasize having fun through writing (Table 5). In responding to the same question about "high" achievers, over a third would emphasize developing and refining an argument in writing while an equal proportion said they would focus on having fun through writing. Nearly one in four would emphasize helping students understand the roles of audience and purpose.

After the training, differences in student teachers' responses were not statistically significant but the proportion of those who said they would emphasize having fun through writing with "low" achievers increased to almost 40 percent while a similar number said they would work on audience and purpose. In working with "high" achievers, more than half of

Table 4

Differences in Types of Tasks Believed Appropriate for Teaching Mathematics to Low and High Achievers

Topic	Percentage who believe topic appropriate for			
	High achievers		Low achievers	
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)
Basic computational skills	0	0	12	8
Nontraditional topics, such as geometry and probability	12	23	0	0
Problem solving	47	62	35	46
Helping students understand the theories behind the topics	29	8	18	8
Making math class fun for students	12	8	24	39
Other	0	0	12	0
Totals[a]	100	100	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989.

Table 5

Differences in Types of Tasks Believed Appropriate for Teaching Writing to Low and High Achievers

Topic	Percentage who believe topic appropriate for			
	High achievers		Low achievers	
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)
Basic spelling and grammatical skills	0	0	12	15
Nontraditional types of writing, like sonnets and editorials	0	0	0	0
Developing and refining an argument in writing	36	54	18	0
Helping students understand the roles of audience and purpose in writing	24	31	35	39
Having fun through writing things like composing haiku	35	15	29	39
Other	6	0	6	8
Totals[a]	100	100	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

the sample said, after the training, they would emphasize developing and refining an argument in writing.

In sum, student teachers believe different academic tasks are appropriate for "low" achievers than those that are appropriate for "high" achievers. In working with the former, making math fun is nearly as popular as problem solving while in working with the "high" achievers problem solving is far and away the most popular choice. In writing, student teachers either believe that making writing fun or helping students understand audience and purpose is most appropriate with "low" achievers while a majority think that they should emphasize developing and refining an argument when working with "high" achievers. The training appears to have little influence on students' thinking about differential access to knowledge insofar as these items capture that thinking.

Source of ideas for teaching. We asked program participants about their own past experience as students as a source of ideas about teaching and learning. Given the rapidly changing character of the pupil population, the increase in non-Anglo students, and given the failure of many schools to serve non-Anglo students, we could argue that the experiences many prospective teachers had in school is not useful or appropriate preparation for tomorrow's classrooms. Yet most student teachers in our sample agreed that they relied on their experience as students for a great deal of their ideas about teaching and learning (Table 6). Ratings before and after the training were not significantly different nor was the mean of the ABCD sample significantly different from that of the NCRTE sample.

Views of ability grouping and tracking. Most students in our sample agreed that teachers should avoid ability grouping, although they appear not to feel strongly about their view (Table 6). The tenuousness of this belief is underlined by the fact that, after the program, student opinion shifted slightly, but not significantly, toward the use of grouping. On the issue of tracking in high school, most students in our sample disagreed with the practice before the training and felt the same afterwards. Compared with student teachers nationally, students in the ABCD sample appear slightly more skeptical about the value of tracking.

Expectations for "slow learners." Related to students' views of ability grouping is how they regard learners labeled as "slow." While both before and after the program participants disagreed with the statement that teachers should focus on "minimum competency" in teaching "slow learners," the strength of their belief diminished slightly although not significantly after training. While nearly a third of the sample disagreed strongly with "minimum competency" as a goal for "slow learners" before the training, only one student felt so strongly afterwards.

Standards for student performance. Before the program, a majority of our sample thought uniform standards should be applied to all pupils. Most of these prospective teachers indicated that they felt strongly about the matter. After the training, even though

the mean remained the same, a shift seemed to occur: Although fewer students disagreed with the idea of uniform standards, more students than before seemed unsure about how they felt and only one asserted that she felt strongly that standards should be the same for all students. Nationally, we found that *at the end of* students' preservice programs they were significantly less likely to agree that uniform standards for all pupils were a good idea (McDiarmid, 1989b).

Individualization. For some educators, the answer to diversity is, ironically, individualization, that is, segregating students from one another during opportunities to learn. One could argue that individualizing instruction is problematic for a number of reasons which we will explain at greater length in the discussion section. Like most student teachers in the NCRTE national sample who disagree with the statement that it is not practical to tailor instruction to each student, those in the ABCD sample overwhelmingly believe that such individualizing is practical. This serves to underline what we found in students' response to Scenario #2 on the interview: an often uncritical endorsement of individualization as *the* way to deal with diversity.

How students learn. Both before and after the training, most students in our sample agreed that students learn best if they figure things out for themselves. The reason this question was included was to find out how student teachers think about learning. Recent work in cognitive psychology suggests that whatever students learn--whether it is what teachers want them to learn or not--they learn on their own (Resnick, 1983). That a number of the students in our sample disagreed with this statement is noteworthy.

Teachers' purpose. We also asked students to respond to three parallel questions designed to assess their views of what teachers ought to being doing: transmitting mainstream values, encouraging students to think, or teaching subject matter. Three-quarters of the ABCD sample disagreed that a teacher's main job was to teach mainstream values before the training--roughly the same proportion who disagreed with the statement after the training. Almost 90 percent of the sample agreed that a teacher's main job is to teach pupils to think and question both before and after the training. On the issue of whether or not the teacher's main job is to teach subject matter, we found less agreement. While most agreed with this statement, more than a third weren't sure or disagreed. After the training, fewer prospective teachers agreed that teaching subject matter was a teacher's main job and almost a quarter declared themselves unsure.

The prospective teachers in our sample appear pretty sure that their main job is to encourage questioning and thinking, less sure that teaching subject matter is their main job, and doubtful that their main job is to transmit mainstream values.

Student ability. While "all students can learn" has become a mantra in U.S. education, evidence exists that prospective teachers continue to believe that the lack of innate ability or correct attitude or a "disadvantaged" home environment means that some

Table 6

Beliefs about Teaching, Learning, and Learners[a]

Statement of Belief	ABCD sample		National sample (N = 98)
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)	
Ideas about teaching			
Experience as a student is a source of ideas for teaching and learning	3.5	3.7	2.8
Tracking and grouping			
Teachers should avoid grouping by ability or performance	2.8	3.7	3.7
High school students should be tracked for required courses	5.0	5.0	4.3
Expectations			
Focus on "minimum competency" in teaching slow learners	5.8	5.3	4.6
Standards			
Teachers should apply same standards to all students	3.5	3.5	3.9
Individualization			
Not practical to tailor instruction to each student	6.1	6.0	5.2
How students learn			
Students learn best if they figure things out for themselves	3.8	3.3	3.1
Teacher's purpose			
Teacher's main job is to transmit values of mainstream cultures	5.3	5.2	4.3
Teacher's main job is to encourage students to think and question	1.9	1.5	2.0
Teacher's main job is to teach subject matter	3.5	3.4	3.7
Student Ability			
Some students can never be good at writing	5.6	5.0	NA[b]
Some students are naturally able to organize their thoughts for writing	2.2	2.8	NA
To be good at mathematics, you need a kind of "mathematical mind."	5.7	4.9	NA

[a]Mean rating on 7-point scale: 1 = Strongly agree to 7 = Strongly disagree.

[b]NA = Not Available.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

Table 7

Views of the Treatment of Regional Dialects

View	Percentage identifying with each view	
	Preprogram (N = 16)	**Postprogram** (N = 13)
Because the purpose of schooling is to get all students to speak the same language, dialects such as black English have no place in the classroom	6	15
While students may use various dialects among themselves and in classroom discussions, they need to use standard English whenever they write	13	23
Dialects like black English are fully legitimate languages and appropriate for classroom discussion and for expressive writing like poetry, but students must use standard English in writing expository prose and formal speech	69	54
Regional dialects (such as black English) are fully legitimate languages and should be accepted in classroom discussions, speeches and compositions on a par with standard English	12	8
Totals[a]	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989; and Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1989.

pupils cannot, in fact, learn. Teachers who hold to such beliefs may use them to decide when to draw the line on their responsibility to see that children in their charge learn. We asked student teachers in the ABCD project three "agree-disagree" questions intended to probe their understandings of children's ability in two specific subjects, mathematics and writing (Table 6). We included the learning of subject matter to provide some context for understanding their responses.

Most students disagreed with the idea that some students can never be good at writing even before the training. Most, however, also agreed with the statement, "Some students are naturally able to organize their thoughts for writing." The use of the word "naturally" was intended to get at their notions of inherence--that is, whether they believed that ability to organize one's thoughts was learned behavior or somehow genetically encoded.

At the same time, keep in mind that in everyday usage, "naturally" is sometimes also applied to what are clearly learned behaviors. After the training, a unmistakable although not statistically significant diminution occurred in the strength of participants' agreement. We included a similar statement about mathematics, although the notion of inherence is explicit, not subtle: "To be good at mathematics, you need a kind of 'mathematical mind.'" Interestingly, no one before and only two students after the training agreed with this statement.

Teaching in English. We asked two questions designed to tap student teachers' beliefs about the use of standard English in the classroom. The first, a Likert-scale item on the self-administered questionnaire, presented the flat statement, "all students should be taught in English." The second offered several different ways in which teachers might respond to the use of regional dialects in class. On both, students in our sample demonstrated considerable tolerance for the use of languages and dialects other than standard English.

On the Likert-scale item, more than a third of the students disagreed with the notion that all students should be taught in English before the training. Another third, however, declared themselves strongly in agreement with the notion of teaching all students in English. After the training, some of the students who had strongly agreed with the statement appeared to become less sure about their conviction: Only two students continued to hold strongly to the idea of teaching everyone in English while more than half of our sample disagreed with the statement. While the change wasn't statistically significant, nonetheless something, perhaps either the ABCD training or the experience of student teaching or both, appears to have caused some students to reconsider their position.

When asked about the use of dialects in the classroom, students again appear fairly tolerant (Table 7). Before the training, nearly 70 percent of the student teachers in the ABCD sample agreed with the position that "dialects like black English are fully legitimate languages and appropriate for classroom discussion and for expressive writing like poetry,

but students must use standard English in writing expository prose and in formal speech." The more extreme positions of either excluding the use of dialects in the classroom or accepting them as fully appropriate for all purposes drew little support either before or after the training. As we developed this item especially for this evaluation, we don't have national data with which to compare the responses of our sample. Comparing the students who went through the training with those in our control group who did not attend the training, we find no significant difference on this item.

Treating Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

We developed two items that are specific to this project and intended to get at issues that members of the evaluation subcommittee consider critical. The first presented six distinct positions on treating cultural diversity in the classroom. We structured the item so that students would have to choose from among the six the one position closest to their own. As is evident from Table 8, most students embrace the idea that the best way to serve culturally different children is "to make sure that *all* students have the opportunity to understand the subject matter in ways that increase their capacity to figure things out for themselves." A quarter of the students before the training did identify with the view that in working with culturally diverse children they should "teach students that American society offers opportunities to everyone and that anyone who wants to improve his or her economic situation can do so if they work hard enough."

Students' views had not changed significantly after the training. Most still thought their responsibility was to make sure that children had equal opportunities to learn the subject matter. While fewer students identified with the "Horatio Alger" option and more agreed that they should celebrate ethnic holidays, these apparent changes could be due to chance.

The other item developed specifically for the program drew on a recent controversy in a Michigan community. Some parents in the community had pressured the school board to go ahead with a play based on the Biblical Christmas story. We presented various positions on the issue from no religious celebrations at all, through equal treatment for all major religious groups, to the explicit teaching of Christian values. As Table 9 indicates, students views were initially across the range, including quite a few that didn't fit in any of the categories we presented. Most students who wrote in their own preferences in the "other" category indicated that they would want to tie in the observation of various religious celebrations with academic study in such subjects as social studies.

Students' responses to this item seem to show a clear effect of the program. Whereas only about 20 percent of the student teachers had agreed, before the training, with the statement that "if we celebrate Christian holidays, also need to observe and celebrate, in a

Table 8

Purposes Prospective Teachers Might Pursue in Ethnically Heterogeneous Classrooms

Purpose	Percentage who rank this purpose first	
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)
To make sure that *all* students have the opportunity to understand the subject matter in ways that increase their capacity to figure things out for themselves	65	54
To honor and celebrate diversity by having students from different backgrounds share their foods, customs, language, and values with their classmates	6	23
To teach the common core of values that all Americans, regardless of their background, share and on which our political and social institutions are built	6	8
To teach students about the discrimination and injustice that various ethnic groups have encountered	0	0
To make sure that, above all else, *all* the students feel good about themselves even if they aren't learning what they should be learning	0	0
To teach students that American society offers opportunities to everyone and that anyone who wants to improve his or her economic situation can do so if they work hard enough	24	15
Totals[a]	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Source: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989.

Table 9

Views on Christmas Celebrations in Schools

View	Percentage who identify with statement	
	Preprogram (N = 17)	Postprogram (N = 13)
I think that in public schools there should not be any celebration of any religious holiday	6	8
If we celebrate Christian holidays, we also need to observe and celebrate, in a similar fashion, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, etc., holidays	19	62
I think too much emphasis is put on holidays in school; we need to put the time and energy that goes onto holiday celebration into school work	13	8
Our culture is predominantly Christian and our children should learn these values	13	8
I think that the argument that children who don't celebrate Christmas will feel excluded is unsound	0	0
I think that the majority of parents support such observances and their wishes should be respected	6	8
Other	44	8
Totals[a]	100	100

[a]Less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Sources: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989.

similar fashion, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, etc., holidays," more than 60 percent did so afterwards. We will discuss the implications of this below.

Discussion

Beliefs About Learners: Some Are Created More Equal Than Others

The greatest paradox in looking at the results not only of the ABCD project but more broadly at teacher education is that students are exposed to increasing amounts of information about children who are culturally different from themselves yet the proportion of those who subsequently recognize and reject stereotypes does not increase--and may even decrease (McDiarmid, 1989b, 1990c). The source of this paradox may lie in how prospective teachers make sense out of the information they encounter. While teacher educators intend that such information will lead prospective teachers to make decisions that increase the chances that culturally different children have to learn, teacher education students interpret the information to fit with their prior experience. The results, given the teacher educators' purpose, are often perverse:

> Well, I would tend to think that their behavior is more appropriate for their background and it probably is their, the way that they treat other people according to the Native-American tradition. They tend to sort of stick together and not really volunteer, interact in a way that, say, Americans, Caucasians, do. (Siilik, 1)

As this quotation indicates, the presentation of information on ethnic and religious groups may actually encourage prospective teachers to generalize and, eventually, to prejudge pupils in their classrooms. More commonly, teacher education students may become unsure about how to think about culturally different children. On the one hand, they are taught to be suspicious of any generalization about a group of people; on the other, they encounter materials and presentations that, in fact, make generalizations about normative values, attitudes, and behaviors among different groups.

Most teacher education students have not had the opportunity to explore their own beliefs about student differences and the role these play in teaching and learning. Rather, their preference seems to be not to confront the issue and to deal with differences by individualizing. The danger of this approach is that, as the data from this evaluation and the NCRTE study (McDiarmid, 1989a) indicate, student teachers appear to pay little attention to the academic consequences of different opportunities to learn. Indeed, while exquisitely sensitive to the nuances of positive and negative praise and reinforcement, they appear almost oblivious to differences in academic tasks and the effects that different

opportunities to learn can have on student understanding of the subject matter and views of themselves as learners (Table 2).

This was no where clearer than in the ABCD participants' responses to the questions on which tasks were appropriate for "high" and "low" achieving students (Tables 4 and 5). In both mathematics and writing, ABCD participants are much more likely to provide "high" achievers than "low" achievers with opportunities to learn high-level knowledge--problem solving in mathematics and developing an argument in writing. A significant proportion of student teachers in our study would emphasize making the subject matter "fun" with "low" achievers. We know that poor children and those of color are more likely to find themselves in low-ability groups or tracks. Consequently, as Oakes (1985) has argued on the basis of her data, poor children and those of color are not as likely to have access to "high-status" knowledge as are middle-class, white children. While well coached in chanting the "all children can learn" mantra, many teacher education students believe--and begin teaching with the belief--that subject matter has to be "sugar-coated" for some children and that some topics--for instance, geometry and probability in elementary classrooms--are fine for "high achievers" but beyond "low achievers."

In short, whatever student teachers actually believe, most have by and large learned to reject explicit stereotypes. At the same time, some of them seem not to know what to do with generalizations they encounter about the values and behaviors of various ethnic and religious groups, generalizations often sanctioned by teacher education programs and textbooks. For some, even to discuss issues such as skin color is a taboo. Another assumption on which many teacher education students appear to operate is that individualization is the answer to differences among learners. At the same time, most student teachers seem to believe that learners' prior achievement dictates that while some children should have access to cognitively challenging topics, others are incapable of learning demanding topics. For these learners, the teacher needs to make learning fun.

Some Thoughts About Project Goals

Many of the views that ABCD students held at the beginning of the program were consistent with the goals of the program: Most of them reject stereotypes as a basis for making instructional decisions; most hold teachers responsible for pupil learning; most are accepting of dialects as legitimate language for the classroom; and most are committed to making sure that all children in a culturally diverse classroom have a chance to understand the subject matter. At the same time, they hold other beliefs and understandings which are arguably problematic in culturally diverse classrooms: They tend to think that so-called "low achievers" need to have subject matter sugar-coated to make it palatable while "high achievers" should engage challenging topics; they tend to accept uncritically individualization as the way to accommodate diversity; and they tend to be preoccupied with management,

verbal praise, and reinforcement at the expense of thoughtful consideration of the effects of various academic content and tasks on meaningful learning and conceptions of self as learner.

These three views that emerge from our data could, in themselves, be objects of instruction. Rather than teaching specific skills or techniques, teacher educators could focus on the understandings on which teachers act. As long as a teacher believes, for instance, that her elementary pupils who have previously performed below average on standardized tests cannot handle such topics as probability and statistics, she is unlikely to create opportunities for them to do so regardless of what skills or information about her students' cultural backgrounds she may have accumulated. Teachers who believe that the way to deal with diversity is to individualize learning tasks will not create opportunities for pupils to learn from one another, to experience making sense of a problem or issue with classmates, to develop an idea that knowledge is socially mediated. As Lampert (1990) has written about her own experience in teaching mathematics to elementary pupils:

> When students are able to reason about whether some operation or relationship makes sense in a familiar domain, they can be taught to make connections between what is familiar and the more abstract routines that pertain in the mathematical world of numbers and symbols. This connection makes it possible to shift the locus of authority in the classroom--*away from* the teacher as a judge and the textbook as a standard of judgement, and *toward* the teachers and students as inquirers who have the power to use mathematical tools to decide whether an answer or a procedure is reasonable.

Teachers who view their primary role as "the person in charge" and who believe the best measure of their effectiveness is how quiet their classrooms are and whether or not they cover the textbook are unlikely to create opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of their capacity to make sense out of the issues and problems they confront. Teachers who ignore the relationship between the meaningfulness of the knowledge to be learned and of the task to be done, on the one hand, and the attention pupils give to the task, on the other, are unlikely to organize tasks to challenge and engage pupils.

When we studied teachers nominated as unusually effective by community members, colleagues, and administrators in rural, Native Alaskan villages, we found that, except for the Native teachers, before moving to the village they knew very little about the values and behaviors of the particular Native group they taught (McDiarmid, Kleinfeld, and Parrett, 1988). Once in the village, however, they put themselves in roles outside of school--as a player on a community basketball team, a participant in skin-sewing gatherings or weekly bingo nights, a member of a hunting or fishing group--in which they learned a great deal of specific information about the children they taught. They, also, of course, learned from the

children themselves, creating opportunities--journals, discussions, chaperoning--for their students to tell them directly, firsthand about their understandings, concerns, interests, worries. Critical to these teachers' success seems to have been their disposition to find out what they needed to know and their sense of what information they needed.

In sum, a number of the perceptions that the project hoped to develop in participants may already have existed before the program--or, at least, the participants claim to hold views that coincide with views the program promotes. The program presented students with a wealth of information--an approach widely used not merely in teacher education but in education generally. An alternative view is that a lack of the right information--the "knowledge base"--is not an adequate explanation for teachers' failure to do a better job in helping culturally different children learn. Rather, some teachers may have fundamental beliefs and assumptions--for instance, that some children can learn "high class" knowledge and others cannot--that must be confronted and challenged. An alternative goal is helping prospective teachers develop their capacity to reason about teaching: consider thoughtfully their learners, the subject matter, the learning process, and the moral and political context in deciding what and how their pupils should learn. Case studies may be a vehicle for the kinds of thoughtful discussions in which we should engage prospective teachers.

Some Thoughts About Pedagogy

That the ABCD project did not seem to have a major effect on student teachers' views of learners, learning, the context, and teachers' role in teaching culturally diverse students should not be surprising. When the NCRTE looked at the effects of five preservice teacher education programs, we found that many of the beliefs prospective teachers bring with them remain untouched after two years (McDiarmid, 1989a). Prospective teachers do not enter preservice programs as blank slates; they have served an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) equal to 1,740 working days--that is how long they have spent in classrooms watching teachers. As a contrast, prospective teachers spend, at most, the equivalent of 90 working days in teacher education courses. A program such as ABCD constitutes about 3 working days.

While not a measure of what is learned, the time prospective teachers spend watching others teach is a powerful influence on their ideas of what their responsibilities are, what teaching and learning are like, and what classrooms should be like (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Jackson, 1968). The relative constancy in the practice of teaching can be explained, in part, by this long apprenticeship: Teachers teach by and large as they were taught themselves (Cohen, 1988; Cuban, 1984). This observation is critical when we realize that most prospective teachers attended schools in which the majority of children were white. Diversity was not as apparent to their teachers as it is likely to be in their own classrooms. Yet, students in this program, just as those completing other

preservice programs, view their own experience as students as a useful and legitimate source of ideas for teaching (McDiarmid, 1989a).

Why aren't teacher education programs more effective in changing students' beliefs and understandings? While this question deserves much more attention that we can give it in a paper of this scope, we would like to suggest that a major impediment is the pedagogy of teacher education. As part of the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study of the NCRTE, we have been observing both teacher education and liberal arts courses and interviewing faculty. We have found some variety in the kinds of classes students attend but the typical class is one familiar from other studies of college education that include observations of classes (Boyer, 1987) as well as from the experience of most of us who have attended college. Typically, students are presented with a mass of information in the form of research findings, generalizations, procedures, techniques, formulas and so on--the substance of the field. Because discourse in the university classroom, like that in precollegiate classrooms, appears to be dominated by the instructor and the instructor's agenda, the opportunities for students to bring to the surface and express their initial understandings of a given subject are usually quite limited (McDiarmid, 1990b). The evidence is that many students learn what they need to pass their exams--but do not change their fundamental understandings and beliefs.

Learning, as cognitive research over the past decade or so has been telling us, consists not in developing undeveloped faculties, stacking enough individual propositions on top of each other to build understanding, or filling in heretofore vacant mental lots:

> [People] do not simply acquire information passively until there is enough of it for "correct" rules and explanations to emerge. This tendency to construct ordered explanations and routines even in the absence of adequate information can account at least partly for another phenomenon . . . : robust beliefs that are resistant to change even when instruction (and thus better information) *does* come along. (Resnick, 1983, p. 26)

In learning, students act upon the information, ideas, and experiences they encounter within and through the structured and ordered understandings and knowledge they have from previous experiences and within and through specific social contexts. To extract meaning from experience, people rely on understandings built on previous experiences and on their social context.

If teacher education is to challenge and change prospective teachers' initial beliefs about learners, learning, subject matter, teaching, and the milieus, the content of courses and the approaches of instructors need to be shaped by prospective teachers' initial conceptions. The recent move to include more findings from research on teaching and more information on various cultural groups as a way of improving instruction and increasing

the success of poor children and those of color seem unlikely to produce the hoped-for results. Prospective teachers, like other learners, reconstruct the information and ideas they encounter to fit into their existing framework. Prospective teachers bring to preservice preparation definite ideas about learners, teaching, and learning. Unless they become aware of their own preconceptions and have the opportunity to examine them, they are likely to reconstruct whatever they experience to fit with their existing understandings.

The content of teacher education should be prospective teachers' understanding of learners, learning, subject matter, teaching, and the milieu and the interconnectedness of these. Prospective teachers need opportunities to examine their initial understandings as well their understandings of the ideas, information, and situations they encounter (for an example of such a foundations course designed to accomplish these ends, see Feiman-Nemser, McDiarmid, Melnick, and Parker, in press; McDiarmid, 1990a; for an example of a similarly designed mathematics methods course, see Ball, 1989). The content is thus shaped, on the one hand, by the instructor's knowledge of the learners' initial framework, constructed from prior experiences, and, on the other, by the instructor's knowledge of the critical ideas or propositions, nature, and interconnections of the subject matter (Ball and McDiarmid, 1990; McDiarmid 1989b; McDiarmid, Ball, Anderson, 1989).

Recommendations

1. Maintaining the Planning Committee

The project personnel at Michigan DOE have gathered together an unusually thoughtful and knowledgeable group that includes inner-city classroom teachers and district office personnel, university teacher educators, DOE specialists, experts from organizations (such as the Anti-Defamation League), and individuals knowledgeable about specific cultural groups. Ellen Carter-Cooper and Deborah Clemmons have managed to bring together representatives of precisely the groups--DOE, teachers, teacher educators, and people with expertise in multicultural education--critical to making progress in this area. As someone who has worked on this issue with a variety of groups, the principal evaluator has been impressed with the knowledge of this group, the spirit of cooperation and seriousness of purpose present at gatherings, and, most critically, the willingness of the group to reconsider what they have done previously and reorganize the program.

The NCRTE study has paid particular attention to the multicultural component of teacher education (McDiarmid, 1989a). If anything is clear from this study it is that everyone is wrestling with the same issue that the ABCD project has undertaken. No one seems to have come up with *the* model program that is clearly and demonstrably more effective than any other. As common ground on which teachers, teacher educators, DOE personnel and so on can gather to define the issues and try out promising approaches, the

ABCD project is a major contribution to the effort to improve the capacity of teachers to work with culturally different children. For this reason alone, the project deserves continued support--from outside funding agencies, from Michigan DOE, and from the institutions and organizations who have supported it during its first year.

2. Reconsider Program Elements That Might Offer Generalizations, However Positive, About Groups of Pupils

Student teachers and beginning teachers are eager for information and ideas that will help them make sense out of the complexities of the classroom. This probably makes them particularly susceptible to generalizations. An aspect of classroom complexity that appears especially daunting for beginning teachers is what to do about children who are culturally different from themselves. Prejudging pupils on the basis of information legitimized by textbooks, formal teacher education programs and "experts" may be an irresistible inclination. If I know that Native-American kids do "tend" to be reticent and shy, I can use that to explain Roy's behavior; I don't have to figure out what's wrong, especially if that could lead back to me and what I'm doing in the classroom. If I know that in some African American peer cultures, doing well in school is considered very uncool or trying to be "white," then I shouldn't push Elizabeth because she's boxed in by her friends' attitudes.

Consideration of actual case studies, on the other hand, could offer students a chance to think about the role that *specific* children's background and prior experience may play in their behavior, how one might appropriately and respectfully go about finding out more, and how one might think about creating opportunities for that particular individual to come to know and understand. Again, the focus of such an approach is the student teachers' capacity to reason rather than their retention of generalized knowledge.

3. Increase the Opportunity for Genuine Discourse in Future Training

As we argued in the discussion section, student teachers are unlikely to reconsider their deeply held beliefs and unconscious assumptions unless these are deliberately confronted and challenged. This involves student teachers in making explicit--for themselves more than for others--what they believe about learners, learning, teaching, and so on. Many of the topics that the training covers lend themselves to discussion and debate.

For instance, Professor Asa Hilliard has written thoughtfully and provocatively challenging the idea of "learning styles"--an idea that some educators accept as gospel (Hilliard, 1989). If the project had the good fortune to have Professor Hilliard participate again, his presence would be an excellent opportunity to engage students in a discussion of the concept of "learning styles." Is this a useful concept in thinking about teaching culturally different children? Is generalizing learning styles across students different from other kinds of generalizations? If so, how? If students do have preferences for the way in which ideas

and information are presented, should teachers "pitch to their strengths" or try to help students develop heretofore undeveloped capacities? Does teaching to students' preferred ways of learning entail individualization? If not, what does this look like? If so, what are the costs of using individualization? Thus, the concept itself becomes an occasion for students to interact with one of the people who has investigated, and thought and written most about educating culturally different children.

Another occasion for student teachers to make explicit their understandings is case studies of teaching. Project personnel made use of cases in their follow-up training session with student teachers in May. As argued above, these allow student teachers to see how they themselves and others reason through a specific instructional situation. Because of the wealth of practicing teachers serving on the planning committee, the project could call on some real "experts" to participate in these discussions. This would allow student teachers to understand how practicing teachers think about situations that they themselves may well face some day.

4. Continue to Collect Data on Students' Views and Knowledge

We can only make this recommendation knowing that we will *not* conduct future evaluations. The project needs to continue to find out how student teachers think about issues in teaching culturally different children. Collecting such data needs to be an institutionalized part of the program. Most multicultural education programs or courses collect no data on students' views nor do they undertake to evaluate what they are doing. Rather, everyone accepts the program as good on the basis of face validity: Since they are teaching teachers about the background, values, customs, and current status of various groups and about research on effective methods with culturally different groups, ergo, they are good. This report--as well as data from the NCRTE study--demonstrates that a program can do exactly what it says it will do--and not change students' fundamental beliefs and understandings.

The ABCD project can break new ground not only in the array of groups that have come together around it and in being thoughtful about restructuring its training in response to information on its effects but also in collecting and using data on participants. Institutionalizing the data collection effort would mean making the administration of the instruments--the questionnaire and interview--part of the training itself. The usefulness of this evaluation has been limited by the relatively low response rates to both the questionnaire and the interview. Higher response rates would enable project personnel to feel greater confidence in the results they obtain and would lend additional strength to arguments they may wish to make for their training as it evolves.

Conclusion

The ABCD project is the product of an unusual collaboration between practitioners--both classroom teachers and teacher educators--and specialists at Michigan DOE. During its first year, the planning committee designed a training for student teachers that was successfully implemented by the project personnel at DOE. Subsequently, the project has been the focus of further discussions and revisions. The purpose of this evaluation is to contribute to that discussion.

The strength of the project is its personnel--both on the planning committee and in the training itself. On the basis of an evaluation of data collected from student teacher participants before and after the training, we recommended that the project planning committee continue to reconsider both the content and organization of the project--specifically, to shift the focus onto student teachers' underlying beliefs about learners, learning, and teachers' role and to do so in a way such that student teachers are explicit about their views and their views become the subject matter of the training. This requires even more interaction among "trainers" and the student teachers than in the first workshop.

Through this project, DOE could significantly influence the way teachers are prepared for culturally different classrooms. Documenting what student teachers know and believe and how these change at least partly as a result of the training is a critical prerequisite to influencing institutions engaged in teacher preparation. Data collection should, therefore, become an institutionalized part of the project.

References

Ball, D. L. (1989, March). *Breaking with experience in learning to teach mathematics: The role of a preservice methods course.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Ball, D. L., and McDiarmid, G. W. (1990). The subject matter preparation of teachers. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook on research on teacher education* (pp. 437-449). New York: Macmillan.

Boyer, E. (1987). *College: The undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper and Row.

Carter-Cooper, E. (1990). *The Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity Project.* Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, Office of Professional Development.

Cohen, D. K. (1988). *Teaching practice: Plus ça change . . .* (Issue Paper 88-4). East Lansing: Michigan State University, National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

Cuban, L. (1984). *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms, 1890-1980.* New York: Longman.

Feiman-Nemser, S., McDiarmid, G. W., Melnick, S., and Parker, M. (in press). Changing beginning teachers' conceptions: A study of an introductory teacher education course. *Journal for the Education of Teachers.*

Feiman-Nemser, S., and Buchmann, M. (1986). The pitfalls of experience. In J. D. Raths and L. D. Katz (Eds.), *Advances in research on teacher education* (Vol. 2). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Goodlad, J. (1984). *A place called school: Prospects for the future.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hilliard, A. S. (1989). Teachers and cultural styles in a pluralistic society. *NEA Today, 7*(6), 65-69.

Jackson, P. (1968). *Life in classrooms.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Kerr, D. H. (1981). The structure of quality in teaching. In J. Soltis (Ed.), *Philosophy and education* (80th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pp. 61-83). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lampert, M. (1990). Choosing and using mathematical tools in classroom discourse. In J. Brophy (Ed.), *Advances in research on teaching* (Vol. 1, pp. 223-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI press.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McDiarmid, G. W. (1989a, October). *Preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms: What's the matter?* Paper presented at the fall meeting of the Far West Holmes Group, Reno, Nevada.

McDiarmid, G. W. (1990a). Challenging prospective teachers' beliefs during an early field experience: A Quixotic understanding? *Journal of Teacher Education*, *41*(3), 12-20.

McDiarmid, G. W. (1990b). The liberal arts: Will more result in better subject matter understanding? *Theory into Practice*, *29*(1), 21-29.

McDiarmid, G. W. (1990c). *What to do about differences? A study of multicultural education for teacher trainees in the Los Angeles Unified School District* (Research Report 90-11). East Lansing: Michigan State University, National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

McDiarmid, G. W., and Ball, D. L. (1988). *"Many moons": Understanding teacher learning from a teacher education perspective* (Issue Paper 88-2). East Lansing: Michigan State University, National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

McDiarmid, G. W., Ball, D. L., and Anderson, C. W. (1989). Why staying one chapter ahead doesn't really work: Subject-specific pedagogy. In M. Reynolds (Ed.), *Knowledge base for the beginning teacher* (pp. 193-205). Oxford, England: Pergamon.

NCRTE. (1988). *Teacher education and learning to teach: A research agenda*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Office of Professional Development. (1988). *Accepting behaviors for cultural diversity: A proposal to the Council of Chief State School Officers*. Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, Author.

Resnick, L. B. (1983). Toward a cognitive theory of instruction. In S. Paris, G. Olson, and H. Stevenson (Eds.), *Learning and motivation in the classroom* (pp. 5-38). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schwab, J. J. (1960/1978). Education and the structure of the disciplines. In I. Westbury and N. Wilkof (Eds.), *Science, curriculum, and liberal education: Selected essays* (pp. 229-272). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Suina, J. (1985) . . . And then I went to school. *New Mexico Journal of Reading*, *5*(2).

APPENDIX A

Program of ABCD Training

ABCD (Accepting Behaviors for Cultural Diversity) for Teachers
Training Schedule
Oakland University

GOAL: Enhancing self-esteem through cultural awareness and instructional enrichment. (What can I do at the personal, classroom, and building levels?)

January 18, 1989

Location: St. John Fisher Chapel--Lower Level
3665 Walton Boulevard
Rochester, Michigan (across the street from Oakland University)
(313) 373-6457

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Refreshments
9:00 - 9:15 a.m.	Welcome--Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan Department of Education, Barbara W. Markle and Gerald J. Pine, Dean, School of Human and Education Services, Oakland University Overview--Deborah Clemmons, Supervisor, Office of Professional Development, Michigan Department of Education
9:15 - 10:00 a.m.	"Developing Cultural Comfort in the Classroom"--Richard Lobenthal, Michigan Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League
10:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.	Activities to Enhance Cultural Awareness "People Perceive Differently"--Janice Brown, Coordinator, Office of School Improvement, Michigan Department of Education "The Orange Experience"--Maxine Cain, Helping Teacher, Lansing School District "The Name Game"--Deena Lockman, Anti-Defamation League
11:15 - 11:45 a.m.	Summary--CaSandra Johnson, Administrative Coordinator, College of Education, Student Teaching Office, Eastern Michigan University
11:45 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch

12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Learning Styles--CaSandra Johnson
	Classroom Management in a Culturally Diverse Classroom--Karen Todorov, Teacher, Redford High School and Maxwell Nadis, Retired Teacher, Detroit Public Schools
1:45 - 2:00 p.m.	Break
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Learning Styles--Dr. Sallyann Poinsett, Wayne County Intermediate School District
	Classroom Management in a Culturally Diverse Classroom--Karen Todorov and Maxwell Nadis
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Wrap-Up--Peter Bunton, Coordinator, Teacher Preparation and Certification Services, Michigan Department of Education

January 19, 1989

Location: Oakland Center, Oakland University--North Hall, Rooms 128-130
Walton Boulevard and Squirrel Road
Rochester, Michigan (313) 370-2100

8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Refreshments
8:45 - 9:15 a.m.	Reflections--CaSandra Johnson
9:15 - 11:45 a.m.	Asa Hilliard Visiting King/Parks/Chavez Professor, Oakland University "Racism and its Impact on Self-Esteem and Instruction"
11:45 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Culture Mart--Maxine Cain Language and Discrimination--Deena Lockman
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Culture Mart--Maxine Cain Language and Discrimination--Deena Lockman
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Wrap-Up--Peter Bunton

January 20, 1989

Location: Oakland Center, Oakland University--North Hall, Rooms 128-130
Walton Boulevard and Squirrel Road
Rochester, Michigan (313) 370-2100

8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Refreshments
8:45 - 9:15 a.m.	Reflections--CaSandra Johnson
9:15 - 11:45 a.m.	"Instructional Strategies for a Culturally Diverse Classroom"--Allan Hurwitz, Education Director, New Detroit, Inc., and Anna Marie Hayes, Professor, College of Education, Wayne State University
11:45 - 1:00 p.m.	Luncheon
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	"Theory into Action--What can be done at the personal, classroom, and building levels to enhance self-esteem through cultural awareness and instructional enrichment?"--Deborah Clemmons, Supervisor, and Ellen Carter-Cooper, Education Consultant, Office of Professional Development, Michigan Department of Education--Facilitators

APPENDIX B

Description of ABCD Sample

Description of ABCD Sample (in %)
($N = 12$)[a]

Ethnicity	White	75
	Black	17
	Hispanic	8
Sex	Female	83
	Male	17
Geographical origin	Small town or rural	50
	Cities or urban areas	50
Level of schooling student will teach	Elementary	75
	Secondary	25
Subject student *most* enjoys teaching	Language arts/reading	50
	History	17
	Mathematics	8
	Science	8
	Social science	8
	Fine arts	8
Subject student *least* enjoys teaching	Science	33
	Fine arts	17
	Physical education	17
	Language arts/reading	17
	Mathematics	8
	Social science	8
Where students plan to teach	Small town or rural	50
	City/urban area	42

[a]We had complete demographic information on 12 of the 17 student teachers in our sample.

Source: ABCD Project Evaluation, Michigan Department of Education, 1989.

APPENDIX C

Examples of Pre- and Postprogram Responses to Scenario #2

Representative Responses

Preprogram, Arctic Hare

R: I think overall her responses are, are, are done very well. There aren't that many things I would change.

I: Okay okay, now suppose that you were in her situation. Would you try to do the same thing she is doing?

R: To, uh, to who? Hold on one minute.

I: Right.

R: Okay, go ahead.

I: Okay, would you try to do the same things that she is doing if you were the teacher?

R: Would I try to do the same things?

I: Yes.

R: I can't hear you.

I: Um, yes.

R: Would I try to the same thing with all the students or with . . . ?

I: Right, with the shy Vietnamese girl.

R: Oh, with the shy Vietnamese girl, um I think I would make a little more effort to, to get her more involved with other students. Uh, I don't know, uh, maybe just talking . . . in a Brownie troop one time I had a, uh, little girl who was real shy and the other kids even picked on her and I talked to the girl who seemed to be the ringleader of the group that was picking on her and mentioned how shy she was and how she, you know, looked so sad that she didn't have any friends and, and uh, you know, it would probably mean a lot to her if someone would go out, you know, go a little out of their way to make her feel more welcome and that turned things around quite a bit. So . . .

I: Okay, can you think of ways that you would do that, to get her involved?

R: Well, like I said, uh, uh, maybe speaking to, uh, very, what do you call it uh, very, very subtly say, you know, maybe say something to some of the other students to make them see that she is by herself and, and uh, you know, not included in the rest of the group and uh, also through, through group activities, you know, section the, the group off, uh, the class off into groups and so that she wasn't constantly working by herself.

I: Okay.

R: Okay.

I: Okay, and then uh, what do you think about Brian the black child whose father is the executive?

R: Uh, could you mention something about him again?

I: Okay, uh, let's see, it says here at mother's request Mrs. Jones moved James away from Brian's table, Brian is the boy, so the two boys wouldn't fight. Brian is working in a self-contained learning center, looking at a picture book and using a tape recorder which the rest of the class will get after recess.

R: So he's, he's basically being singled out to be by himself?

I: Right.

R: Is that what you're saying?

I: That appears to be the story, yes.

R: Um, uh, it, it, it, it's good to a certain extent to allow children to have time by themselves if they really don't wanna be with the group but I don't think purposely singling a child out to, to do activities by himself that the other group does as a whole, is something that uh, is great, real great, but if there is a behavior problem between two students uh, yes I could, I would separate them. If the behavior problem seems to follow one student around then, uh, I would, I would uh, try to counsel the child or seek counsel for him.

I: Okay, and uh, James is the student who comes from uh . . .

R: A very poor family.

I: Right.

R: Okay, um, one more time tell me how she, oh that, she seemed to handle, um, I'm trying to think, she seemed to handle it very well I thought uh, by trying to point out the positive things he was doing more than the negative because uh, the negative uh, because of his background, uh, it helps to, to make him proud of other aspects of his life, like, like the way he does his school work and just something to make him proud.

Postprogram, Arctic Hare

R: I think her positive comments to James were very appropriate and . . .

I: I don't know if you want me to recap. Vikki, she is . . .

R: Vikki is the shy Vietnamese girl.

I: Yes, she is doing the geometric shapes.

R: It sounds like she is working with Vikki and Vikki is behind the other kids. Working with shapes sounds more like preschool or kindergarten. I think Vikki should be getting a little bit more individualized learning to help her move a little faster to that stage of the other students. Does Vikki have a language problem?

I: Well, she has just been recently adopted, it says. And her English still sounds awkward.

R: I would also say that perhaps the teacher in this case, first grade, to get her involved a little more with some of the students, to perhaps ask Vikki if she would like to show some of those girls, some of the students, other students things about her life. First, of course, I would talk to the parents to make sure, Vikki, that wouldn't be a bad thing.

I: I understand what you are saying, yeah, see if it is appropriate?

R: And the same with the second one, Brian. Since he moves so frequently, I would ask him if perhaps he had some information that he would like to share with the class about different areas that he has lived in. And the differences that he's noticed.

I: Right. James?

R: James, (pause) Moving his seat is good, I've had problems with a couple of girls who were real close and all that they did was chitter-chatter during the class. Moving one, you know, worked. But obviously in James's case, she has had him moved several times and it still hasn't worked, so something else is necessary.

I: Right. In terms of these three students though, are there any things that she has done, that you would not do?

R: It sounds she, to me, she is helping the bright ones. I could be wrong too, that is my interpretation. I think she is encouraging the reservation.

I: What aspects would you say are encouraging reservation?

R: Including her (inaudible) shapes. Touching, especially in the lower grades, hand on the shoulder or (inaudible) the teacher is important, but I don't know if a pat on the head, to me, sounds condescending.

I: And in terms of the activities that James and Brian are doing, would you do the same things or would you not do them?

R: Well, I am not that familiar with what's happening in first grade. (inaudible).

I: Brian is in the self-contained learning center, he is looking at a picture book and using a tape recorder to dictate a story. Mrs. Jones is going to play the tape to the rest of the class after recess and James is sitting, writing the letters "m" and "n".

R: This is a one class situation. I wouldn't know what to do in a different class.

I: But just in terms of comparing the types of things that she is doing.

R: It seems like she, like I said, she was holding Vikki, not purposely, but kind of hoping to hold Vikki behind rather helping her to go ahead. And Brian, she is pushing ahead to be creative and . . .

I: Do you think there is any reason she is pushing him ahead?

R: Well, he is the son of a corporative executive. We are all guilty of forming biases and if he already has a record of being studious and intelligent, we tend to encourage that more because that makes us look good. What kind of teacher we are, and James is a continual problem, causes class disruption. It's easier to just, well here, you just keep busy doing this and I'll keep praising you for keeping busy, but we are not going to push you too hard because we know that you are not really as capable.

I: Do you think that's true or do you think that's? . . .

R: What in this case? It's, I don't know.

I: Just generally, I mean.

R: I think teachers are trying to become more aware. I think some of the things that are happening now, teachers are trying to become more aware what's happening in the schools, that teachers are becoming more aware.

I: So, are there other things that you would do that she has not done?

I: You mentioned, Vikki, that maybe you would have them more integrated into the classroom. I mean, but in terms of James and Brian. Or let's say Brian and James because that is the order that I presented them to you.

R: Did you say that James and Brian always fought?

I: Yeah, then they moved away, yeah, I did say that. Brian was the first guy, James is the second guy. James has moved away from Brian, Brian's mother requested that James move away from Brian's table so the two boys would not fight.

R: It's hard not being in the situation, I hate to see two kids that argue with each other, there has to be a reason why they are fighting. I think I would try to find out if James resents Brian for some reason because his parents have money, you know first graders come out and tell you that, but you can basically talk to them and maybe have the two just communicate a little more. . . . I don't know what, to tell you the truth. Try to make them more aware of each other.

I: Okay, well that seems to more or less cover everything. I don't know if there is anything you would like to say generally about the second scenario, Mrs. Jones.

R: She sounds like a pretty effective teacher.

I: Your reasons for saying that would be?

R: Pardon?

I: And why would you say that?

R: Just in some of the messages she is trying to control the classroom situation, she is trying to do a good job in classroom management, she is trying to challenge students. (inaudible).

Preprogram, Vole

R: Okay yes, I would say she's being too cute um, being sexist to Vikki and with um, the boys. She's, she's like oh what a cute a little girl, patting her on the head and everything and then the stand-offish oral um, praise for the other child. Okay um, would, you know it's hard as a teacher to know what is just right as far as praise. Some children more, some children less, but too often it becomes um, stereotyping the sexes.

I: Right, Okay.

R: Oh this little girl is so cute with little ribbons in her hair and little boy, he's rough and tumble and we'll just slug him on his shoulder, he's doing a swell job you know.

I: Oh yeah, quite. So how would you handle it then?

R: How would I handle it?

I: Okay, let's look in terms of Vikki then, you know I mean she's very quiet, she, she's doing these shapes and she's getting patted on her head.

R: Well I certainly would not do well with a slug on the shoulder, um, but at the same time it shouldn't be overdone. If she's doing well, I, I, stamp on top of her papers, this is fine instead of constant praise as well as um, with uh, the last boy that was mentioned.

I: James.

R: That can be overdone too and especially she was saying all this praise and then following it up with oh, and, and sit up in your chair too. There's this praise and oh and while you're at it, one more behavior modification here. Um, the middle child is um, I don't know, I'm trying to think, now this is the really active one?

I: Right, although James was the active, okay. We've got Vikki first, she's a Vietnamese, then we've got Brian who's very competitive and his mother's involved and he's in the learning center.

R: I think Brian's ego, well you know, saying oh we're going to listen to your story and . . .

I: Mm-hm. How do you feel about that?

R: Um . . .

I: I mean look at it from James's point of view or Vikki's, you know.

R: Right, um, I, I think um, she's, she's going on for one of the um, a less, you know, you want, you probably wouldn't want to bring about these points with each one of them on their own, and she's feeding him on negative points.

I: Okay. What do you mean by that?

R: Okay, where probably James who could use a little more affection like um, the girl's getting, and the girl could use um a little less and the middle child could use a little less feeding his ego and a little more of reality. We're not always winners and it's okay to lose sometimes too.

I: Yeah, how would you go about that with, with Brian, though, okay, I mean his mother's in the classroom and he's going to dictate his story. How would you handle him, you know, knowing the fact that he's very competitive?

R: I suppose you're not only dealing with the child but you're dealing with the parents here too. Uh and, parents' ego.

I: Yeah, that's right.

R: Um, it's not easy.

I: It's not easy, is it?

R: Uh-uh.

I: Yeah.

R: I don't think I could come up with one clear reason right off the top of my head.

I: No, I understand the difficulty. It's just I wanted you, I don't know whether there's any general comments you'd like to make about Mrs. Jones?

R: Well I um . . .

I: Or, or about what we've been discussing.

R: I, I would, I don't think, but it's a, um, for success, I think it's um, success is important all the way around and the child needs to feel successful right what they're doing or else they won't do good.

I: Right, and how would you go about it making sure they feel successful?

R: Um, I, everything in a little bit of modification, but to go to um extreme extents is wrong too. You're setting them up more for failure than anything else. Then eventually they're going to find out in real life that they're not always going to be the greatest in their, you know.

I: Yeah, so basically that can, the way Mrs. Jones is handling this situation you don't feel is right?

R: They could be okay, but it shouldn't be overdone.

I: Okay, yeah.

R: I think it's blown out of proportion.

Postprogram, Vole

R: That's tough. First of all she's doing the typical sex discrimination as far as, oh you're cute and you're this to the girl. And encouraging that part which I think the child is getting enough encouragement at home as it is. It's not bad but to do it excessively I feel is wrong.

I: Maybe what we can do is take each one individually and that would be easier. I think we can take Vikki first. Okay she's the Vietnamese.

R: I don't think that she's showing any real racial discrimination at all. And it sounds like she's individualizing well with . . . let's see. It sounds like she's matching the children's needs. Their situations. James is the one with the problem. It sounds like she is giving him a positive encouragement to a point. However, to single him out, to say things like that out loud too often I think is wrong too. She's overdoing it. To mention once in a while that James is sitting quietly today and she really appreciates it, I think that's nice. But to overdo it will put a lot of shame on the child.

I: And in terms of Brian, he's in the self-contained learning center, he's taping the story which she's going to read to the whole class later. He's the competitive guy whose parents move around a lot. He's in all the different sporting activities. His father is a corporate executive. That's basically the facts.

R: I think she's doing fine. I can't really see any problems as far as that goes. The only problem I do find is that they don't get along according to the mother. I would have to wonder why, you know, if that's encouraging the class or not. If a parent requests it, there's only so many things you can do.

I: Are there any things that you would not do that she is doing?

R: I would have a tendency not to be so feminine with the girl. I would probably try not to be as negative as "don't sit back in your chair."

I: Why would your tendency . . . ?

R: Because to just tell a child "don't" is not good. To use something more positive as in a "do" rule. Please sit up straight. Or do sit up straight. Instead of don't lean back. The one in self-contained, it's hard to say. If he's in self-contained and he's a very competitive child, I don't know if he's put back there because he's too competitive of the other children or if the competition is good against himself. He's working in something that individually challenges is own ability it might be a good idea. But if he's doing it to put him back there for other reasons, I don't know. If he's given the chance, if everyone is given the chance to read their stories after lunch, or to read them out loud would be fine. But if this child is being singled out then those who don't do as well will feel singled out. I think if you do it for one you should always do it for all.

I: Are there any things that you would do that she has not done?

R: As far as the one goes that she's got singled out, the poorly behaved child.

I: James.

R: Right. I might try a buddy system before I try the singling out. As far as . . .

I: Maybe you could explain that a little bit.

R: As far as specifically putting the child off by himself is putting him in isolation in the class. The teacher is creating more of a problem. Do you know what I'm saying?

I: I know what you're saying.

R: To buddy him up and make some kind of contract where two kids could agree that I'm going to help this child in this situation. Maybe one child has a behavior problem or another might have a problem as far as cognitive abilities. And to work as a team.

I: So you would carefully select his buddy then?

R: I personally, yes, I would.

I: So what criteria would you use for him?

R: Probably basically the grade book as far as cognitive skills and sociogram, and behavior skills.

I: Just generally, I don't know if you want to comment, I mean she individualizes while still maintaining order. There's nothing specific that you, is there anything additional that you would do.

R: No if this teacher wants to individualize her teaching which is a very difficult thing to do. I would say no. Because if she wants to be that individual she's going to

have to teach every child differently. Basically like I said, if you want to individualize, it depends on the degree of individualization. You know you can go with that as far as behavior, your requirements, your curriculum. Where you know one child may be working very well independently, sometimes it's not to that level yet, they excel somewhere else. To concentrate and try to develop those talents that they know of. But if you've got them all working at the same level and you expect everything straight across the board I might try to teach different.